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Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 SAM-01 SAJ-01 NIC-01

DRC-01 /154 W
---------- 070602
R 060800Z SEP 74
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1219
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 580

KUWAIT PASS DOHA AND MUSCAT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IZ
SUBJECT: REACTION TO U.S. STATEMENT ON SOVIET BASE AT UM QASR

REF: BAGHDAD 575

1. SUMMARY: U.S. STATEMENTS THAT SOVIETS HAVE MAJOR NAVAL
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OPERATING BASE AT UM QASR, IN ADDITION TO ELICITING

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IRAQI DENIAL (REFTEL), HAVE CAUSED STIR IN DIPLOMATIC COMMU-
NITY AND DISCUSSION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A BASE. MOST
OBSERVERS DOUBT THAT FORMAL BASE AGREEMENT EXISTS, BUT
AGREE THAT IN TIME OF CRISIS IN WHICH SOVIET AND IRAQI
INTERESTS COINCIDE, SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE USE OF
UM QASR FACILITIES. END SUMMARY

2. FRENCH CHARGE SAILLARD IS NOT PREPARED TO DISCOUNT
EXISTENCE OF SOVIET BASE, BUT NEITHER DOES HE HAVE
ANY EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THAT BASE EXISTS IN USUAL MEANING
OF WORD; I.E. AREA UNDER SOVIET JURISDICTION AND WHERE
FACILITIES CAN BE UTILIZED WITHOUT OBTAINING SPECIFIC GOI
AUTHORIZATION FOR EACH VISIT. ON OOTHER HAND, CIRCUMSTANTIAL
EVIDENCE THAT BASE EXISTS INCLUDEES FACTS THAT (A) NO
FRENCH OFFICIALS HAVE EVER BEEN PERMITTED O VISIT UM QASR;
(B) FRENCH NAVAL UNITS HAVE HAD PERMISSION TO CALL AT
UM QASR, BUT AT LAST MINUTE GOI ALWAYS DIVERTED THEM TO
BASRA; (C) ALL SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS MADE THERE, AND (D)
SOVIETS ARE CONSTRUCTING FACILITIES THERE, OSTENSIBLY FOR
IRAQI NAVY.

3. INDIAN MILITARY ATTACHE AND INTELLIGENCE OFFICER GO
SLIGHTLY FURTHER. THEY SUSPECT SOVIETS DIRECTLY CONTROL AN
AREA AT UM QASR AND SAY THAT EACH UNIT OF SOVIET INDIAN
OCEAN FLEET VISITS UM QASR ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS, WITH
GOI PERMISSION BEING STRICTLY PRO FORMA. INDIAN
AMBASSADOR SINGH, ON OTHER HAND, DISCOUNTS COMPLETELY
IDEA OF A BASE. HE ALSO TOLD ME HE HAD VISITED UM
QASR SEVERAL TIMES AND THERE IS ONLY ONE SMALL QUAI.
FURTHERMORE, SOVIET WARSHIPS ALWAYS ANCHOR WELL OFFSHORE.

4. DESPITE KNOWN SOVIET USE OF UM QASR BRITISH, AS WELL
AS OTHERS, DOOUBT THAT GOI HAS GRANTED SOVIETS ANY FORMAL
BASE RIGHTS.

5. RELATIVE MILDNESS OF GOI REACTION AND FACT THAT IT NOT
CONTAINED IN OFFICIAL STATEMENT IS INTERPRETED HERE AS SIGN
THAT GOI DOES NOT WISH TO ANGER USG AT THIS TIME WHEN IT
SEEKING SUPPORT IN CONFLICT WITH IRAN. RUMANIAN AMBASSADOR
CALLED INA STATEMENT (REFTEL) DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
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FROM SOVIETS.

6. COMMENT: FROM VERY LIMITED INFF AVAILABLE INN BAGHDAD,
CONCLUSION APPEARS TO BE THAT WHILE GOI HAS PROBABLY NOT
SIGNED FORMAL BASE AGREEMENT, SOVIETS ARE PERMITTED REGULAR
USE OF CERTAIN (UNSPECIFIED) FACILITIES. THIS AUTHORIZATION
COULD CEASE WHENEVER GOI SO DECIDED. DANGER IS THAT IN
CRISIS SITUATION IN WHICH IRAQI AND SOVIET OBJECTIVES

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COINCIDED, SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE USE OF THESE FACILITIES. THUS CAPABILITY IS THERE EVEN IF AT PRESENT TIME NO FORMAL ARRANGEMENT EXISTS.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ADDRESSEES TO HAVE CURRENT DIA ASSESSMENT ON SOVIET USE OF UM QASR. LOWRIE

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